

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JIDDA 06544 121351Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----088638 121353Z /43

P R 121215Z SEP 78  
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3260  
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T JIDDA 6544

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR, SA  
SUBJECT: SAUDI POSITION ON LEBANON

REF: (A) JIDDA 6535 (B) STATE 221464 (C) JIDDA 6402  
(D) JIDDA 6408 (E) STATE 224264 (F) DAMASCUS 5205  
(G) BEIRUT 5115

1. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS HANDED  
POL COUN NOTE VERBALE ON SEPTEMBER 10 GIVING SAG RESPONSE  
TO OUR MESSAGE OF AUGUST 31 (REFTEL B) . TEXT OF NOTE VERBALE  
SENT REFTEL (A).

2. POL COUN SAID THAT HE FELT MANSOURI HAD MISUNDER-  
STOOD OUR MESSAGE OF AUGUST 31 TO PRINCE SAUD. WE HAD  
NOT MEANT TO IMPLY THAT PHALANGE MILITIA REPRESENTED ALL

THE CHRISTIAN IN LEBANON. OUR POINT WAS THAT EXCESSES  
OF SYRIANS IN ADF WERE BEGINNING TO ALIENATE CHRISTIANS  
TO SUCH EXTENT THAT THEY WERE BEING DRIVEN INTO ARMS OF

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PHALANGISTS. WE FELT THIS WAS UNFORTUNATE. IF SYRIAN  
PURPOSES WAS TO RESTORE ORDER, THEIR ACTIONS WERE ACTUALLY  
COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, SINCE THEIR ACTIVITIES WERE BOUND TO  
CREATE FURTHER VIOLENCE AND FURTHER CHALLENGES TO AUTHORITY  
OF ADF. SECONDLY, OUR MESSAGE DID NOT SAY THAT WE SUSPECTED  
SYRIA OF HAVING TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS.

3. MANSOURI BROKE IN AT THIS POINT TO SAY THAT EVEN SO SYRIANS WERE WIDELY SUSPECTED OF HAVING AMBITIONS OF PERMANENT OCCUPATION IN LEBANON. EVEN SYRIA FEARED THIS AT ONE TIME. SAUDI VIEW NOW IS THAT SYRIA WISHES TO RETIAN INFLUENCE BOTH POLITCAL AND ECONOMIC IN LEBANON AFTER WITHDRAWAL. SYRIANS ESPECIALLY WANT TO HARMONIZE LEBANESE ECONOMIC POLICIES WITH SYRIAN ECONOMIC POLICIES. SAG DOES NOT LOOK WITH GREAT FAVOR ON SYRIAN ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH HEGEMONY IN LEBANON. YET, THERE IS LITTLE THAT SAG CAN DO ABOUT IT AT PRESENT. FIRST PRIORRYT NOW IS TO REESTABLISH LEBANESE AUTHORITY THROUGHTOUT THE COUNTRY AND TO GET SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL. PERHAPS SYRIAN HEGEMONY CAN BE CHALLENGED LATER. TO REESTABLISH LEBANESE AUTHORITY MEANT BRINGING THE MILITIAS U DER CONTROL SOMEHOW.

4. POL COUN SAID THAT U.S. GOALS IN LEBANON ACCORDED WELL WITH SAUDI GOALS. OUR DIFFERENCES WERE OVER MITHOD OF ACCOMPLISHING THOSE GOALS. WE DO NOT BELEIVE THAT AN ATTEMPT TO BRING MILITIAS UNDER CONTROL BY MILITARY MEANS IS THE BEST WAY TO BRING ABOUT A SETTLEMENT. SUCH A COURSE OF ACTION COULD LEAD TO BITTERNESS THAT WOULD PLAGUE THE COUNTRY AND HAVE AN UNSETTLING EFFECT FOR YEARS TO COME. PERHAPS THE BEST WAY TO BRING THE MILITIAS UNDER CONTROL IS THROUGH POLITICAL OR DIPLOMATIC MEANS TTO BRING IN THE MEANTIME, OUR PIMARY AIM IS TO PREVENT AN UN-  
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FORTUNATE CONFRONTATION THAT WILL RUIN THE CHANCES FOR USING POLITICAL OR DIPLOMATIC MEANS TO BRING ABOUT A SETTLEMENT. THIS IS WHY WE HAVE BEEN URGING THE SYRIANS, AS WELL AS THE CHRISTIAN, TO RESTRAIN THEMSELVES.

5. POL COUN ALSO SAID THAT WE WERE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT ISRAEL'S REACTION TO ANY SYRIAN ATTEMPT TO CRUSH MILITIAS MILITARILY. WE HAVE CONVEYED TO SYRIANS AND TO LEBANESE OUR PERCEPTION OF THE ISRAELI MOOD AND THE CONCERNS THIS CAUSED US. A SYRIAN ATTEMPT TO CRUSH THE MILITIA MILITARILY COULD BRING ABOUT ISRAELI INTERVENTION. IN THIS RESPECT, IT IS TRUE THAT WE HAVE BEEN CARRYING MESSAGES. BY THE SAME TOKEN, WE HAVE CARRIED MESSAGES IN THE OTHER DIRECTION, EXPRESSING TO ISRAELIS THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE SYRIANS AND LEBANESE HAVE VIEWED ISRAELI ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN RIGHTISTS. OUR PEOPLE IN ISRAEL HAVE WORKED EXTREMELY HARD TO DISSUADE THE ISRAELIS FROM INTERFERING IN LEBANON.

6. MANSOURI SAID OUR GOALS WERE SIMILAR. SAG WANTS TO FIND WAY TO BRING ABOUT SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, HE SAID QUESTION OF RENEWAL OF

ADF WOULD NOT BE DECIDED AT ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL MEETING  
IN CAIRO. THIS MATTER HAS BEEN DEFERRED UNTIL ARAB  
FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN NEW YORK. IF THE FIGHTING  
DIES DOWN OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS, SAG MIGHT  
FAVOR TERMINATION OF ADF MANDATE. SYRIA WILL THEN BE  
IN LEBANON WITHOUT ARAB LEAGUE COVER, AND THE ARAB  
STATES WILL THEN BE IN A POSITION TO PUSH FOR WITHDRAWAL.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
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**Draft Date:** 12 sep 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
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**Reference:** 78 JIDDA 6535, 78 STATE 221464, 78 JIDDA 6402, 78 JIDDA 6408, 78 STATE 224264, 78 DAMASCUS 5205  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014